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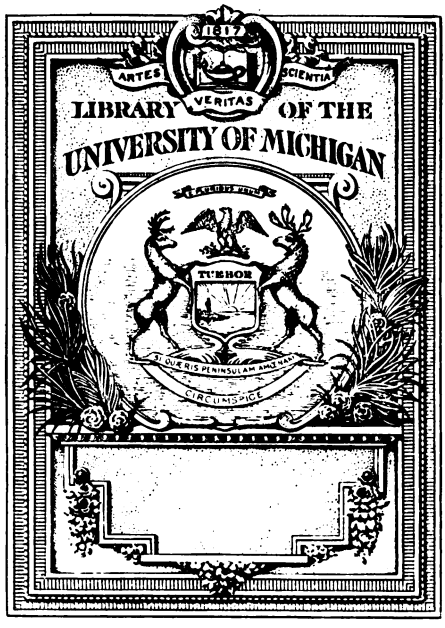

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GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE.

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[DOC. No. I.]

GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE

AND

ANNUAL REPORTS

OF THE

PUBLIC OFFICERS OF THE STATE,

AND OF THE

BOARDS OF DIRECTORS,

VISITORS, SUPERINTENDENTS,

AND OTHER

AGENTS OF PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS OR INTERESTS

OF VIRGINIA.

PRINTED UNDER RESOLUTIONS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

RICHMOND:
WILLIAM F. RITCHIE, PUBLIC PRINTER.

1849.

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DOCUMENTS

REFERRED TO IN

GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE.

No. 2.—Auditor's Report.
3.—Treasurer's Report.
4.—Report Superintendent Literary Fund.
5.—Report Rector and Visitors University of Virginia.
6.—Fund Internal Improvement, and Debt and Resources of the State.
7.—Report Superintendent Penitentiary.
8.—Report Adjutant-General.
9.—Report Superintendent Armory.
10.—Report Visitors Virginia Military Institute.
11.—Report of Superintendent of Public Edifices.
12.—Report Superintendent Western Asylum.
13.—Report Superintendent Eastern Asylum.
14.—Report Board Visitors Deaf, Dumb and Blind Institution.
15.—Bank Returns.
16.—Report President and Directors James River and Kanawha Company.
17.—Report of President and Directors Board of Public Works.

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MESSAGE.

Fellow-Citizens of the
Senate and House of Delegates:

I welcome you, with great pleasure, to the capitol, and offer you my congratulations upon the condition in which you will find the general interests of the commonwealth. Notwithstanding the fears expressed by many lest the liberal spirit evinced in the more recent legislation of the state, touching the improvement of roads and canals, would embarrass our finances, the reports I herewith transmit to you from the several departments, will shew that our condition is sound and prosperous. Indeed, there is every thing in it to vindicate the wisdom of the legislature, and to gratify the friends of a judicious but liberal system of internal improvement. It will be, I am sure, gratifying to you, and to the people at large, to know that Virginia has at her command ample means to discharge all her subsisting public debt, with the exception of a very small and inconsiderable sum. If it were thought desirable to-morrow to wipe out the public debt, a sale at par of her profitable and interest-paying stocks would effect it. This present subsisting debt amounts to $7,541,294 11. The annual interest and dividends received by the state amount to $430,752 08; shewing that the stocks yielding this sum are worth, at par, $7,179,200, or about the amount of the public debt; that is, within $362,000 of our present indebtedness. There is, however, an additional sum of $6000,000, which, under existing laws, may be called for out of the treasury, and about $5,000,000 of which will, it is thought, be certainly demanded in the course of a few years; hence this sum, although not now a subsisting debt, will become so, and ought, therefore, to be taken into the estimates of our liabilities. This view shews the precise condition of our financial situation, and is fully sustained by the reports and documents which will be laid before the legislature. The state, it is true, has guarantied loans, to a considerable amount, for various incorporated companies, which securityship some have regarded a part of the public debt; but this is unquestionably an error, for a knowledge of the resources and the prospects of the companies, whose bonds have been guarantied, will satisfy all that they are, or will ultimately be, amply able to pay their bonds, as, up to this time, they have always done the interest on them.

This exposition is a cheering one to all, but to none more so than the friends of internal improvements, for which the debt has been mainly created. However, whilst it shews the perfect capacity of the commonwealth to manage her present debt without inconvenience, it

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also shews the necessity of the greatest prudence and circumspection on the part of the legislature, to avoid such increase of our indebtedness as may result in future embarrassment and additional taxation. Nothing ought to be more cautiously avoided, or earnestly deprecated by the advocates of the recent liberal system of improvement than such a result. I would recommend, therefore, that, except such sums as are necessary to carry on the great works already begun, or such as are essentially necessary to contribute to their success and profit, no farther appropriation should be made for the present out of the treasury. I make this recommendation with the greater confidence, because I believe the success of a permanent and wise system of internal improvements depends upon it.

If any thing can ever restore to Virginia that pecuniary and commercial ascendancy which she once possessed in the confederacy, it must be the consummation of the system of internal improvements she has already embarked in, and the completion of the truly great works already commenced. To endanger the system, or to impede the prosecution of those works, is to strike a fatal blow at the resuscitation of the commonwealth; and nothing would be so effectual for this, as a lavish expenditure of public money upon insignificant projects, from which the state at large could never receive any benefit.

The great works of internal improvement, already undertaken and so generously sustained by the public funds and public credit, together with one or two proposed but not yet determined upon, are calculated to develop very fully the resources of the state, and to swell the tide of her commercial prosperity to its utmost limits. The entire energies of the commonwealth should be devoted to their completion, but in such a way as to avoid embarrassment and to escape onerous taxation. That this can be effected by the prudence and wisdom of the legislature, I have no doubt.

It is now reduced almost to an axiom, that the greatest commercial prosperity in the Atlantic States, is only attainable by a connection with the valley of the Mississippi; and hence, from Massachusetts to Georgia, we see almost every state along the sea-coast, competing anxiously and earnestly with each other, for the shortest, cheapest and safest communication.

The commercial ascendancy of Virginia was at one period of our history undisputed; her natural advantages of navigable streams, climate and soil, gave it to her. Trusting to these, we have neglected those artificial means, which could alone secure it to us permanently; and therefore the commerce, which once whitened with its sails our seaports, has almost disappeared from our waters. The example set us by our neighbors at the North is one of wisdom, and deserves our most earnest attention. In spite of a bleak climate and sterile soil, they have, by a judicious policy, afforded such facilities to intercommunication and trade, that commerce with her golden tides has filled the land with plenty, prosperity and wealth. Our natural advantages remain still the same; they are unequalled by any Atlantic state; and whilst it is now probably too late to divert the commerce of the Atlantic cities from its present channels; still it is in the power of demon-

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stration to shew that a vast deal of what we have unwisely lost, can be regained, and that we can still secure a fair division of that commercial wealth and power which is now monopolized by the North.

Situated about midway between the northern boundary of the United States and the Gulf of Mexico, we escape in a great degree the rigors of the northern winters, and the scorching heat of the South. Our eastern border upon the river Potomac and the Chesapeake bay, is dotted with harbors unsurpassed in safety and capacity. The fleets of the whole earth could ride safely at anchor within them. Our western border is washed for several hundred miles by the Ohio river, and at other points along it, the rich region of Kentucky and the fertile valley of the Tennessee are of easy access. Besides this, the country lying between the eastern and western boundaries, of which I speak, is unsurpassed for its fertility and the variety of its products. Mimerals of every description are to be found of the most superior quality, and in quantities absolutely inexhaustible, whilst the earth in which they are embedded, unlike other mineral regions, is of the most desirable character for husbandry. Let this country be penetrated by improvements connecting our seaports with the Ohio, with Kentucky and the valley of Tennessee, and it will infuse a spirit of enterprize into the population, which must, in a short time, fully develop all of our resources.

The topography of the country is most favorable for the completion of these great connecting lines. From tide-water to the Mississippi river at Memphis, there is no mountain barrier interposing a serious difficulty to the construction of a railroad, whilst the region traversed by it is inferior to none of the same extent, for mineral and agricultural resources, upon the continent of North America. The valley of the Tennessee, one of the most magnificent of all those washed by the waters of the West, the annual commerce of which is worth thirty-five millions of dollars, will find in this road an outlet for its rich products to the Atlantic. And a cargo of merchandize, landed at Norfolk or Richmond, would be safely transported to the city of Memphis, ready for distribution upon those mighty waters, in less than ten days. The "Virginia and Tennessee" railroad will effect this great object, when it shall be finally completed; and it affords me great pleasure to say, we are warranted in the belief that it will be prosecuted with energy and despatch.

The James river and Kanawha canal, having for its object the connection of tide-water with the Ohio river, has for a good many years been generously sustained by appropriations of public money; and, although it has met with strong opposition, it still maintains itself steadfastly in the approbation of well informed reflecting men. The results to Virginia, which are to flow from its completion, will strike the mind, upon a little reflection, as really stupendous. I have no doubt but that the commerce passing through this canal will rapidly build up the towns of Virginia, to the magnitude of the first American cities, and will rescue us in a great measure from the miserable consequences of our past apathy and inaction.

The effects upon the prosperity and destiny of New York, produced

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by the completion of the Erie canal opening the commerce of the lakes to that city, are perfectly familiar to every one; the daily increasing importance of it, is also quite as well understood. Without the Erie canal, the city of New York would have been second still to Philadelphia. Great as the advantages of this work unquestionably are, those of the James river and Kanawha canal are undoubtedly superior. It possesses the striking advantage of lying five degrees south of the great northern work, and therefore, free from the ice which obstructs the navigation there, for so large a proportion of the year. It touches the Ohio river, far south of any water communication from the Atlantic whatever; and at a point, south of which there can be across the country no water connection. It will, after the first of November, command all the trade of a great part of Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois and Missouri—and most probably, of those regions lying still higher up towards the sources of the Missouri and Mississippi; for, after that period, it is unsafe to send produce north, in the direction of Boston, New York or Philadelphia. A striking and peculiar advantage presented by this line, is its continuity. There is no necessity whatever for transhipment. We will see canal boats, laden at the falls of St. Anthony or Council Bluff discharging their cargoes at Lynchburg, Richmond and Norfolk. The extent and fertility of the region through which this work will pass, is unsurpassed by any accessible country within the territories of the United States. Superadded to this, the rivers, canals and railroads, emptying into and resting upon the Ohio and Mississippi, will bring from the remote interior, which in every direction they penetrate, their contributions, to swell still higher the rich tide of commerce, flowing through the heart of the commonwealth. The trade in Indian corn, which has recently sprung up, and is increasing with such surprising rapidity between Europe and America, will be almost monopolized by this line; and will of itself, presently, build up and sustain a great city. Norfolk must be the point for its shipment, for it can reach there and be sent away, without the injury which it is sure to sustain from detention at the more southern points. Indeed, this line will monopolize, in a great measure, the transportation of all the principal articles of food, which are produced in the Mississippi valley for consumption in our Atlantic States and in Europe. It is a fact universally known, that provisions of every kind suffer injury from the climate during their transit by New Orleans and through the Gulf.

We have seen what the commerce of the lakes has done for the states of Massachusetts and New York; but the country which supplies it, sinks into comparative insignificance, when looked at by the side of that I have just described. These are some, probably the most striking, but only a very few of the reasons which present themselves to the mind in behalf of this great enterprize. To elaborate the subject would require a volume. I earnestly recommend the steady, energetic prosecution of the work to its completion.

The South-west is already provided with a great work—the central line accomplishes all that is necessary, or that can be effected for the country through which it passes. The Louisa railroad is wending its

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way slowly, but most certainly to the banks of the Ohio. The Baltimore and Ohio railroad, together with the Chesapeake and Ohio canal, provide our northern border with every facility of transportation to market.

It has been frequently proposed and very strongly urged, to construct a railroad from some point on this side of the Blue Ridge to the Ohio river at Parkersburg. It would seem as if even-handed justice required from the legislature for that extensive, fertile and prosperous country, between our northern line and the central canal, an improvement which would penetrate and pass through it about midway. I would advise the examination of this route by competent engineers, to ascertain its feasibility and its advantages. If upon full information this work should be determined upon and carried out, then, four grand lines of improvement passing from the western limits of the state eastward across the Blue Ridge, would pour the rich tides of that really fine country into the tide-water cities, and would unite, in one common and familiar brotherhood, the inhabitants of all "the grand divisions" of the state. In place of three divisions there would be no division, and instead of the senseless jealousy which now exists, one common interest, as one common parentage and glory, would unite them in a single effort for the advancement of the common happiness and prosperity of all.

Another connection between the tide-water of Virginia and the Ohio river, by means of a railroad, has been settled on in the public mind; nor will it be abandoned until the work is completed. Its importance, no one familiar with the results most likely to accrue from it will doubt. Its feasibility has been demonstrated by actual surveys, and the only question still in doubt of material moment to the project, is, at what point the Ohio river shall be reached.

In determining this, a proper regard must be had to the chartered rights already secured to other companies, and care be taken to prevent a rivalry between the works, which might endanger the complete success of either. This great object can be attained, in my opinion, by selecting Louisville in Kentucky as the western terminus for the road; and it is of no moment whether this road be a branch of the Virginia and Tennessee railroad, the Louisa road, or a branch of the Alexandria and Gordonsville road, crossing through Manassa's gap and passing thence westward to the proposed point. The route is accessible to each, and will, in my opinion, amply remunerate the patrons of each, although all of them should unite in the work, and depend for their profit upon the respective branches connecting with the main trunk, which would extend from Covington to Louisville. The construction of a railroad from tide-water to Louisville, upon this route, has been a favorite idea with me for many years, and I am sure is one which will challenge the approbation of all reflecting men, who will take the trouble to investigate the subject.

The surveys of competent engineers have shewn that Covington is of easy access from tide-water. From thence to Louisville, although no engineer has surveyed it, I venture the opinion, is a route of more easy accomplishment, than any other now proposed, lying between

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the northern boundary of New York and the valley of Tennessee. The great barrier of the Alleghany is, upon this line, in the county of Monroe, depressed into a gentle ascent, scarcely perceptible to a traveller on horseback. The insurmountable obstacle which the Cumberland mountains present every where else sinks down between Virginia and Kentucky, at the head-waters of the Sandy river in the county of Tazewell, into a low and narrow ridge. The residue of the line to Lexington, Kentucky, lies along easy and accessible valleys and plains. From Covington to the Kentucky line is less than 150 miles, and the distance from thence to Lexington, is still shorter. So that, when the united efforts of Virginia and Kentucky shall have accomplished the construction of less than three hundred miles of railroad, the falls of Ohio and the falls of James river will be united by railroad and canal, in bonds of eternal fellowship.

The advantages of a connection at Louisville are numerous and very striking. The navigation of the river below that point is seldom, for any length of time, impeded by ice in winter or the drought of summer and fall. Not so above. With this connection, the merchandize, intended for the winter and early spring supplies of a very large portion of the West, would most certainly be distributed from Louisville, having reached there from the Northern cities by this unimpeded southern route, whilst the water communication at the North would have been closed, so to remain for months afterwards. Nor is there any railroad north of us which could compete successfully, with this combined water line and railroad in the transportation of merchandize or produce. The diminished distance and the mild climate must settle in our favor, beyond a doubt, the question of competition. But this link of railroad from Covington to Louisville is but a very short one in the great chain, of which it will certainly form a part, stretching from the Atlantic ocean to the shores of the Pacific. The energy of the American people is aroused on the subject of this work, and its accomplishment has already been determined upon in the public mind. It cannot be believed that an improvement from which are to flow the most momentous results, consequent upon any enterprize since the discovery of the passage around the Cape of Good Hope, will be long neglected by this great and prosperous nation. The fruits of our glorious war with Mexico will be imperfect—the monument which the valour of our invincible armies has erected to our national grandeur and renown, will be unfinished, without the construction of this most stupendous work.

From the earliest history of the world down to this day, the commerce of India has been the prize for which the nations of the earth have eagerly contended. From the time when Hiram, King of Tyre, sent his ships to bring gold from Ophir to decorate the temple of Solomon, down to the last arrival of British merchantmen at the East India docks in London, there has never failed a stream, bearing upon its bosom spices and rich silks, jewels and pure gold, to give wealth, elegance, refinement and power to the nation of people fortunate enough to be its recipient. Great cities have sprung up under its invigorating influence, and won for themselves an immortal fame. But, commerce

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changing into a different channel, has left these once opulent marts a "desolation and reproach." The same consequences which have followed for thousands of years upon a given cause, cannot now fail in our day and country. By means of our possessions on the Pacific, the obstacle which this continent presents to the direct line of vessels from India to Europe, is not only removed, but made to afford means of a more rapid and safe intercourse than the ocean itself could secure.

If the East India commerce can then be brought across our continent upon a railroad, that road, seeking the best route, must pass through the midst of our commonwealth. From Norfolk, the best Atlantic seaport, or from any other tide-water city of Virginia, there is no difficulty in reaching the city of Louisville. At this point the Ohio can be easily bridged, affording, as it does, a rock foundation across the entire channel. From thence, through the states of Indiana and Illinois, the ground is favorable for a road, and the Mississippi itself furnishes a rock foundation for a bridge across its bosom, at "the Grand Tower," not far above the mouth of the Ohio. From this, if I am rightly informed, no water courses interpose barriers to the construction of a railroad, until the magnificent bay of San Francisco shall be reached. There is nothing, then, to hinder a car, laden with the rich silks and aromatic spices of India on the shores of the Pacific, from pursuing its continuous and uninterrupted course, until its journey is completed, and it rests upon the banks of the Chesapeake. To complete this line to the frontiers of the United States, Virginia, Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois and Missouri, are all equally interested. These five great central states are unequalled for fertility of soil and variety of product, mineral and agricultural. That their united efforts could achieve the completion of the work to our frontier, without materially feeling the burthen, is beyond cavil or dispute. This view is not chimerical. The object can be attained—the enterprize will be accomplished.

There is already a greater length of railroad in the United States, than would, if in a single line, connect the two great oceans—and the stock of all is profitable. But the combined commerce of all these roads is but a tithe of that which would pass across our continent from India—how then could the road fail to pay such profit as would amply compensate capital for its construction?

We cannot misunderstand or fail to appreciate the value of the prize; and the construction of the proposed road to Louisville, is a most powerful means of securing it to ourselves.

The legislature has been munificent towards the City of Alexandria, since its re-annexation to the commonwealth; and it is pleasing to know that this course is equally approved by the dictates of wisdom and of justice. This liberality has expedited the completion of that really great work, the Chesapeake and Ohio canal, as far as Cumberland, in the state of Maryland. Upon this canal, now nearly ready to be opened, presently will be transported a coal trade, inferior to none in America, either in the quantities carried down upon it, or in the quality of the mineral itself. Alexandria will be the chief mart for it, and the commerce, thereby brought to her wharves, will

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not only resuscitate her, but must give such impulse to all her interests, as cannot fail to raise the city to a high degree of prosperity and advancement. The works undertaken and proposed by her enterprising citizens, leading into the interior, are important to her well-being, as well as that of the country proposed to be reached by them. These works deserve the patronageand support of the commonwealth.

The other public works of the state are prosecuted generally, I believe, with energy, and promise much usefulness. The Danville railroad company is pushing on its work to completion with great vigor, and, as far as I have been able to ascertain, on the most favorable terms.

The subject of reform has engaged the attention of our citizens, more or less, ever since the adoption of our present heterogeneous and unwise constitution; it was the offspring of exaggerated sectional jealousy—not of an earnest desire to reform abuses too intolerable to be borne. The evident distrust of popular authority and control, which is written upon every page of it, has from its birth rendered it justly obnoxious to the people at large. It is most unfortunate that greater concessions were not made, then, to the exercise of power by the people—a few alterations in some particulars would, in all probability, have obviated the necessity of another convention for half a century, notwithstanding the inherent defects of the constitution. These defects render a call now inevitable, and certainly nothing short of a thorough constitutional reform will satisfy the demands of the people. The sooner this is accomplished, the better for all the interests of the commonwealth.

The county court system, as such, is repugnant to the fundamental principles of republican government—it has high judicial powers, it has high legislative authority—the power of taxation and of selecting and appointing important executive officers. It is a self-perpetuating body, responsible to no earthly power for its action, not even to the people whom they tax, and whose money they expend for any purpose whatever, that to them may seem good. The practical ill effects of the system have been less felt by the community, because of the generally highly intelligent and meritorious character of the magistrates themselves. As a body, the magistracy of Virginia is of the very highest respectability; but whilst it affords me real pleasure to bear testimony to this fact, I am constrained to say that the power confided to their hands, should be entrusted to officers directly responsible to the people.

But the most glaring wrong perpetrated upon the rights and intelligence of the people, is to be met with in those provisions touching the right of suffrage. The rule controlling that high privilege, now, is a purely arbitrary one. The principle governing the right of suffrage under the old constitution is discarded, because too restricted—and the *reason* for it, discarded also. It is a rule now, without principle, and without reason to support it; senseless and insulting in the distinctions which it draws, and most pernicious in the consequences which flow from it. The abrogation of this provision of the constitution, and the substitution of the proper one in its stead, would, in my

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opinion, well justify the expense and trouble consequent upon the call of a convention. The ground upon which the old constitution placed the right was distinct and definite. It went upon the idea, that the owners of the soil should not only govern that, but should govern every thing else beside. The absurdity of that idea has long been exploded; and it is now repudiated by the enlightened statesmen of every state in the Union.

The principle of universal suffrage ought to be adopted. Justice requires it, and the spirit of the age demands it at the hands of the commonwealth. Every free white man, a citizen of the state, over twenty-one years of age, should be allowed to vote in the county where he resides—but no where else. The right to vote in as many counties as can be reached by a man holding real or pretended title to land therein, is an insult to reason and an outrage upon popular rights: it is calculated to give to the cities and towns a control over the interests of the surrounding country, which can result in nothing but injury and discontent. This is one of the crying evils—a nuisance rendered sacred by constitutional enactment, which the public mind revolts at, and will have remedied.

The judiciary system needs reform; and I believe I am warranted in saying, such is the almost universal sentiment of our entire population. It is useless, however, for me to attempt a specification of the evils which need redress; they are quite familiar to all.

I earnestly recommend that a law be passed, requiring a poll to be opened in each county, to test the sense of the people, at the ensuing election, upon the call of a convention. If it results in a call, the succeeding legislature can settle the necessary preliminaries for its meeting, and, in the mean time, the census will be taken, so as to afford ample information to guide you in your deliberations.

You will, I am sure, be gratified to learn that the schools and colleges generally throughout the commonwealth are in an unprecedentedly flourishing condition. The University of Virginia, so long and so generously fostered by the commonwealth, is now giving most ample proof of the wisdom of the policy heretofore pursued towards it by your body. It is in a more prosperous condition now than at any previous previous period of its history, and bids fair to fulfil completely the objects had in view by its illustrious founder. The annual reports of the institution are herewith transmitted.

The Military Institute, commenced as an experiment by the state, has turned out most triumphantly successful, and is exhibiting capacities for usefulness certainly unsurpassed, and scarcely equalled, by any other system of education known amongst us. The spirit of reckless insubordination so common at other colleges, and by thoughtless young men often considered a grace rather than a reproach, at this institution is unknown. The military feature of the school works like a charm, and the point of honor with the student is subordination to the laws and obedience to discipline. Habits of regularity, system and order are acquired here, which must be of incalculable advantage throughout all after life to the graduate.

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I think the public interest would be greatly advanced by an enlargement of the means of accommodation for students, and by the endowment of additional professorships; and I am persuaded that the appointment of a competent professor of agricultural chemistry in this institution, and in the University, would confer lasting and invaluable benefits upon the state at large. I herewith transmit to you a letter from Col. Smith, the able and efficient principal of the Military institute, relative to this professorship, and the propriety of establishing a farm in connection with the school. The suggestions are of the highest interest to the state, and deserve to be adopted.

I also invite your attention to the Medical College located in the City of Richmond. This institution was founded by individual enterprize, and has been almost wholly sustained by its professors. The general assembly granted it loans from the Literary fund, amounting to $25,000, to defray the expense of erecting the college edifice, but required interest upon these loans to be paid by the faculty. They have regularly complied with the requisition in good faith, although it has cost them, to do this, and to meet other necessities of the institution since its establishment, one half of their entire professional fees. By such efforts of its professors the institution has secured a firm place in the public confidence and respect, and reached a high degree of prosperity. The number of students is now larger than ever before, and there is good reason to anticipate continued and increasing success in the future.

The subject of medical education is of great economical interest to the state. It appears from document No. 37 of the last legislature that the aggregate expenditure abroad of Virginia students for this species of education, during the last forty years, has been some $3,000,000, exclusive of interest. From satisfactory sources of information, it has been ascertained that the number of medical students from this state, who attended lectures abroad during the last winter, was not less than 225, who carried with them and expended in other states at least $100,000. It is also a fact that two-sevenths of the matriculations from other states than Pennsylvania, in the two leading medical colleges of Philadelphia, last winter, were of students from this commonwealth. A liberal policy on your part towards a medical institution at home, combining as many advantages as the college in Richmond, would do much to check this disposition of our young men to go abroad at such an annual tax upon the resources of the state, and would result, as the liberal policy of the legislature towards the University of Virginia has resulted, in building up a flourishing institution at home, which will not only attract the great majority of Virginia students, but large numbers of young men from other states, to its halls.

To relieve the faculty of this institution from paying the interest now required of them, would relieve them of a burden which greatly depresses their energies and hangs heavily upon the prosperity of their college. I think the measure would advance the interests of medical science in Virginia, and be an act of justice and wise liberality towards

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the professors of that institution. I recommend it therefore to your favorable consideration.

It affords me great pleasure to assure you of an improvement in the agricultural condition of the commonwealth generally. The energy, industry and intellect of a large portion of our best citizens have been devoted with assiduity for some years past to this ennobling pursuit. The consequence of course is, not only a rapid advancement in the profits of the state at large from that source, but a very highly improved appearance in the face of the country itself. It is worthy of remark, that whilst Virginia has extended, with great liberality, assistance to education and works of improvement, she has never given to agriculture any encouragement whatever. This is the more surprising when we reflect that upon this great pursuit rest all the interests of society. Let agriculture flourish and prosper, and no occupation of society will fail to thrive. There have been at all times, too, in the legislature, a large number of members engaged in and identified with agriculture; but, up to this time, they have been content to labor for other interests, thought to be of more pressing importance, and to postpone, with a liberal disinterestedness, that which pertained more particularly to their own pursuits. If there is in the commonwealth a pursuit which deserves encouragement from the legislature, undoubtedly it is agriculture. If you take the planters, graziers and farmers of Virginia together, they constitute a body unsurpassed for all the qualities of intellect and character that adorn a people; and, if some means were adopted by the legislature to concentrate their efforts for the advancement of their occupation, a very little time only would be required to improve the agriculture of the state to its highest pitch.

A bill of the last session, providing for the appointment of an agricultural chemist for the state, was one of great merit, and calculated to promote the interest of the commonwealth. I think its passage a matter of the first importance.

I would also recommend to the favorable consideration of the legislature, the propriety of appropriating annually such sums of money as may be necessary to sustain a properly organized state agricultural society. This course has been pursued by several states of the North, and in every case with beneficial results. The annual appropriations of New York for this purpose amount to about $8000; and, as far as I can learn, have given the greatest impetus to agricultural prosperity in all its branches.

You will perceive from the report of the superintendent of the penitentiary, that this institution continues to be prosperous and useful. The order and system, which characterize its management, ensure strict discipline, and as large a profit as can be realized from prison labor. I concur fully in the suggestion of the superintendent touching the minimum term of imprisonment. One year is wholly inadequate for any beneficial effect upon the prisoner; the term is too short to acquire any knowledge whatever of a trade, whilst the degradation and disgrace are as great as for the longest period of confinement. The labor of the convict for so short a period will be wholly unproductive to the state, and the term of discipline too short for even a hope of

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reformation. The transportation of the offenders from the remote parts of the commonwealth, will be a serious item of additional expense. I am satisfied that the minimum period of punishment in the penitentiary should not be less than three years; it gives time to acquire some knowledge of a trade, whilst the discipline for that length of time will afford some hope of reformation. For crimes of less magnitude than those deserving this length of confinement, imprisonment in the county jail, and the infliction of corporal punishment, would seem to satisfy the ends of justice.

I also transmit to you a report of the adjutant-general, relative to the condition of the volunteer companies in the state. The views it embraces, I recommend to your particular attention.

Recent events in the campaigns of Mexico have demonstrated the utility and efficiency of this description of troops, even in an army of invasion. For purposes of defence at home, they would be scarcely, if at all, inferior to regular troops. Virginia possesses peculiar advantages, growing out of the system of education at her military institute, for rendering this arm of the militia perfectly effective. The encouragement of volunteer companies in the large towns and cities of the commonwealth, is most obviously proper, and to this end it is very desirable that the men should be exempted from service upon juries. The tax in time and money, necessarily imposed upon the members of volunteer companies, is very onerous; and, when augmented by the probable call to serve in the jury box, is rendered insupportable to men who depend upon their personal exertions for their livelihood. To relieve them from this duty would be a source of great encouragement to the volunteer system, and I therefore recommend it to the legislature.

A society has been organized by a number of gentlemen of talent and respectability, having for its object the collection and preservation of all the facts connected with the history of Virginia. The usefulness of such an association is evidently a matter of the greatest importance to the proper elucidation of our early history. It is to be feared that many valuable facts are irremediably lost through the neglect of this precaution. The warfare which won the territory of Virginia from the aborigines of the country was one of the most remarkable to be met with in the records of any country. Expeditions of the greatest danger, full of important consequences to the infant settlements, were frequently undertaken, prompted alone by individual prowess and enterprise. This desultory conflict, being perpetually waged, resulted finally in the conquest of our territory to the banks of the Ohio. In its progress many scenes of thrilling interest and startling adventure characterized the strife. These incidents will be regarded by future generations as essential muniments of our title to national glory and renown.

This society has already entitled itself to the gratitude of the state, from the publications it has made, connected with the early voyages to America. Virginia owes it to herself to give her legislative countenance and assistance to this meritorious undertaking.

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The attention of the legislature has been earnestly called on several occasions to the subject of the free negro population in the commonwealth, but as yet no system has been adopted concerning the future disposition of them. I am strongly inclined to think that the most feasible plan, yet proposed for the reduction of their numbers, is to give ample assistance to the Colonization society. The best and wisest men of our nation have given it their countenance and support; and I cannot perceive that any practical improvement upon it has ever been suggested. It is a subject which demands your particular attention.

I herewith transmit to you resolutions of the Missouri legislature, touching the subject of federal interference with slavery. They are wise, temperate and patriotic, such as must command the respect and approbation of every Virginian.

I also transmit resolutions passed by the legislature of New Hampshire, of an opposite character, upon the same subject. It is painful to see principles and opinions, so disorganizing and ruinous in their tendencies as those embodied here, taking deep root in the minds and feelings of a people so richly deserving of our admiration in many particulars as those of New Hampshire.

This fearful question now agitating the country in its entire length is one fraught with the most momentous consequences, and is one upon which the destiny of the Union itself seems to hang. The "free soil" party claim for congress the right to exclude slavery from all the territories of the United States; and, acting upon this assumption, they declare their purpose of prohibiting the southern man from emigrating with his slaves to any of the national domain not now erected into a slave state.

It is difficult for those beyond the influence of the fanaticism which suggests and sustains these dangerous and disorganizing doctrines, to bring themselves to believe that such gross injustice and wrong could be seriously thought of by any deliberative body. The tendency of the movement is directly to disunion; the consummation of it will be the overthrow of our free institutions. If any great question of human liberty was involved in the issue; if any grand or striking system of policy, affecting the glory of the nation, depended upon its success; then there might be some reason found to excuse the jeopardy into which the country is plunged by it. But we look in vain for any justification of the sort. The movement originated in a wild fanaticism, and is persisted in from mere wantonness and lust of power. Not even the flimsy veil of a transcendental philanthropy for the negro slave is offered, to conceal the revolting features of the black treason against the constitution of the nation; for there would not be one slave the less in all America, even should congress append the "Wilmot Proviso" to every law upon the statute book. If this party were sincere in their desires to wipe out "the blot of slavery" from American soil, they should seek to introduce it into that portion of our country where the climate, soil and productions would all appeal with power to the master to liberate the slave.

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Let the slave be carried where he is a burthen rather than a source of profit, and self-interest will prompt his liberation there, much more certainly than the zealous efforts of a disinterested piety in the regions where cotton and tobacco grow. But the tender consideration of the "free soiler" for the African, confines him forever in the country where it is profitable to keep him in perpetual bondage. It is very evident that, if the slaves of Virginia and Kentucky were distributed over all the country ceded to the United States by Virginia in 1787, the probabilities of their liberation would be increased many hundred fold, even without the appliances so freely but ineffectually resorted to now in various parts of the Union.

The terms of deep and bitter reproach which the fanatics of the North heap upon the South, as being disfigured with the "blot of African bondage"—a land withering under the "curse of slavery"—are not to be reconciled with a simple desire to exclude slavery from the territories, which is their avowed object. In spite of any disclaimer—in spite of a professed veneration for the sacred constitution we value so much, a determination to overthrow slavery is manifest in their course of procedure. They have either resolved to dissolve the Union, or, believing that the South has not the spirit to resist, have determined to invade the sanctuaries of our homes and liberate our slaves.

There might be discovered some justification in the course of outrage pursued towards us, if, upon a comparison, our country and people sank into insignificance by the side of our revilers. But bigotry itself would not venture such a charge. Our slave-holding country furnishes the staple products which foster foreign commerce, and secures to the North the wealth and prosperity they enjoy and boast of. The "curse" of slavery has not filled our land with felony and crime. We have no riots, mobs, arson and wholesale murder to mourn over, to punish or to countenance. We have no work-houses crowded with famishing and unprovided wretchedness; no swarms of beggars infesting our cities; no onerous poor rates levied to support everlasting pauperism. All is peace, quiet and order. From one extremity of the land to the other, there is felt, in every ramification of society, perfect and absolute personal security.

The intellectual culture of our country will scarcely be considered inferior to that of our non-slaveholding brethren at the North; whilst the patriotism and valour of our sons will certainly not suffer in comparison with any. Where and how this "blighting influence of slavery" manifests itself, it is impossible to see. Battling against the idea of slavery, they hazard the safety of the Union.

If a fanatical sentimentality is to break down the provisions of a written constitution, there is at once an end of the confederacy. It is worse than idle to discuss questions of ethics with the enthusiast, who denounces as "a curse" an institution established by the command of God himself, and who aspires to teach a morality purer than that of our Redeemer.

We plant ourselves upon the constitution itself, and rest our claims to protection upon its solemn guarantees. We desire no more power

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for slavery than is conferred by it; we ask no greater security. The querulous complaints which the fanatics make continually against the aggressive spirit of "the slave power," are calculated only to deceive their deluded followers. "The slave power" dictated the terms of the present Union, and gave up voluntarily that authority and control, which the agitators say it is now striving to lay hold on. The surrender of the Northwestern territory, under the ordinance of 1787, rendered it impossible that "the slave power" should ever after have the ascendancy in the Union. We ask for no superiority; but equality of rights, privileges and immunities, we not only ask for but are resolved to have.

There can be nothing more monstrous than the power claimed for congress to exclude slavery from the territories. Congress has no powers except those conferred on it by the express terms of the constitution, or such as are necessary to carry into effect those expressly granted. There is no clause in that instrument conferring upon congress authority to legislate upon the subject of slavery, in the territories or elsewhere; nor will it be pretended that the exercise of this power is necessary to carry into effect any expressly granted. To touch the subject at all, then, is a palpable and direct infraction of the constitution. The safeguards, which were thrown around the liberties of the people by the wisdom of those who framed the constitution, are demolished. Nothing is so simple as republican government, founded upon a written organic law, fixed and inflexible, to which all legislative action must conform. To this invention America owes its greatness and its liberty. It is, however, in vain to talk of the supremacy of the people, idle to teach that they are the source of all power, unless the law which fixes the authority of the legislature shall be written and unchangeable. But allow the unauthorized action of the legislature to-day, to be given as a reason for the exercise of the same power to-morrow, and the rights of the people will be already usurped and their liberties in danger. Such, precisely, is the condition of things at this moment in the congress of the United States. The only shadow of justification they pretend to for the prohibition of slavery in the territories is, that the Missouri compromise, as it is termed, excluded it from all territory north of 36° 30′ of N. latitude. Without even a pretence of constitutional right for this action, they now urge it as a precedent giving authority to violate that compromise and to exclude slavery from all territory belonging to the United States. If we point to the letter of the constitution as the only source of authority, they point with triumph to the Missouri compromise. If we then insist upon the limits fixed by that agreement, they laugh at the credulity which attempts to define authority derived from precedent alone. Even now, by virtue of this single precedent, congress claims the power of abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia and in all the forts and arsenals belonging to the federal government in the South, as well as to prohibit the transportation and sale of slaves from one state to another. So we are not left to speculate upon the probable consequences of submitting to the un-

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authorized exercise of power in a given case. The fruits of it are plain; they are ruinous and never-ending aggressions.

The loyalty and devotion of Virginia to the Union are known to the world. They are written upon the enduring pages of our country's history. She was amongst the first to strike for constitutional liberty: she will be the last to abandon it. The great compromises upon which it rests she offered; and she herself suffered the chief sacrifices to secure its permanency—she has given with a liberality, which at this day can scarcely be reconciled with the dictates of wisdom. In all things touching the honor and glory of the confederacy, her hand has never been closed, except upon the sword.

She cannot submit to this usurpation of authority; this violation of her rights; this wanton degradation. Let us insist that the question be settled now and forever. Let us have no palliatives, no deceptive truces, no delays which only give strength to the spirit of aggression; no compromises which leave the question open for future adjustment. Let it be settled as to every foot of territory belonging to the United States, or which may hereafter be hers, by a compact as solemn and inviolable as the constitution itself. Any thing short of this is certain ruin to the South—it is annihilation. If a conflict must come, let it come now. We are strong in reality—stronger still in comparison with those whose hands are already raised against us. A few more years of acquiescence and supineness will bring about a necessity of an absolute submission to every wrong which oppression or contempt might heap upon our country.

Submission to the proposed action of congress is a virtual surrender of the entire South to the African race. If slavery is to be confined to its present limits, with a girdle of free states surrounding us, from the Atlantic to the Gulf of Mexico, a very few years, in a nation's history, will be sufficient to drive the white man beyond its limits. The sturdy laborer, the stay and support of every community, would soon leave the country swarming with negroes, for a residence in another land. The master, too, would presently follow, finding it impossible to remain. This view is no matter of conjecture merely; a simple rule of arithmetic will fix the fact and the time of its consummation, taking as a basis of the calculation the census of the last thirty years. Such are the fruits which the northern fanaticism, viewed in its most favorable aspect, must produce to the South. The consequences to the North will be little less disastrous. The great American staples must be cut short—the foreign commerce sustained by them will disappear from the seaports of our enterprising neighbours—their manufactures, should they be continued, must find a market abroad, in unprotected competition with the labor of Europe. The thrift and prosperity which now so pre-eminently characterize the working clases of New England and the North would vanish away; and the mechanic and laborer would discover, when too late, that, whilst striking the manacles of legal slavery from the hands of the African, he had riveted upon the necks of his own children the bondage of necessity, which no earthly power could ever again remove.

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England's experiment with her West India colonies has proved a failure: this is admitted by all. It has not elevated the character of the negro man, nor has it contributed to his happiness. But the fatal consequences which are certainly to result to England from that stupendous folly, will, in the round of years, take from that colossal power the supremacy of the seas. It has struck a deadly blow at her colonial trade; and this was one of the chief elements of her maritime superiority. Shall examples of this sort teach us nothing? Is a blind fanaticism to overwhelm all things in its course?

This, I solemnly believe, is the most favorable view which can be taken of the subject, if Congress persists in its present course of aggression towards us.

But the wildest visionary would hardly expect to see these results brought peaceably about. Humanity itself must shudder at the bare contemplation of the slaughter most certainly to follow a prosecution of these iniquitous schemes. We cannot leave our homes: the ashes of Washington, Henry and Jefferson, may not be desecrated by the tread of the African's foot. The men of the South will not remain passive: the sword will not rest in the scabbard, whilst fanaticism is erecting at our hearth-stones an altar, upon which the victims of sacrifice are to be our daughters and our wives.

The almost unanimous sentiment of the slaveholding country upon this subject is not the result of political agitation seeking for party ascendancy. It is the spontaneous outburst of a whole people, upon the conviction that their dearest rights are menaced. Party prejudices and animosities are buried; every tenet of faith, and shade of political opinion, agree perfectly; and the novel spectacle is presented of eight millions of people, actuated by and obedient to a single determination, arising as one man to stay the hand of usurpation and wrong.

Let us trust that our brethren at the North will understand, before it is forever too late, that a feeling of self preservation, and not one of silly bravado, actuates our course. Let us hope still that our common sufferings and common triumphs, the memories of the past and the bright hopes of the future which we offer to all mankind, may stay the madness which is precipitating us into a ruin from which no human power can ever grant us even the hope of rescue.

JOHN B. FLOYD.

December 3, 1849.

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VOLUNTEER COMPANIES.

ADJUTANT-GENERAL'S OFFICE,
November 24th, 1849.

To His Excellency GOV. FLOYD.

SIR,

In reply to your enquiries as to the importance of sustaining the volunteer corps of the state, and the most effectual means of attaining that object, I respectfully report, that the militia of the line in time of peace cannot, under any practicable system, be so trained and disciplined as to enable it to meet a sudden emergency.

The reliance of the state then, for the suppression of tumults, insurrections or other disturbances of the public peace or safety, or for repelling invasion, is, necessarily, upon the volunteer corps.

That public spirit which carries young men into their ranks, at an expense in time and money which many of them cannot well afford—their promptitude and efficiency upon every call, no matter on what occasion, eminently entitle the volunteers to the confidence and gratitude of the state, and to all the support and encouragement the legislature can give them.

Upon all occasions, in past time, they have instantly responded to every call upon them for *any* service. The insurrection of Southampton in 1831 affords a striking illustration of that fact. Intelligence of this occurrence reached the then governor, by express, at an early hour of the morning, and it was represented to be far more formidable and extensive than ultimately it proved to be. There was then but a single armed company between the seat of government and Southampton, and not one stand of public arms in that or any of the adjacent counties. An instant call upon the volunteers threw into Southampton, within twenty-four hours after the governor received intelligence, a force sufficient to have put down any number of insurgents that could have been embodied. The dawn of the next morning after the issuing of the governor's orders, found the Richmond artillery with a complete field train, and 1000 stand of arms for the militia, upon the ground, and in a few hours more, the Richmond troop of cavalry and a battalion of volunteers from Norfolk and Portsmouth.

But for these volunteers, it is undeniable that no militia force, sufficient to meet the emergency, could have been embodied and armed in several days. What has happened may happen again, and in that case there can be no doubt that, without an efficient force of volunteers, the consequences would be serious. It is therefore absolutely necessary to meet the question, how such a force can most certainly be kept up. Experience has proved that the provisions of law here-

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tofore designed for that object are insufficient—for in every quarter the volunteer corps are few in number, and can with difficulty be sustained.

Among the encouragements (so called,) now held out to them, is the exemption from ordinary militia duty after seven successive years' service—but that is not sufficient. The new law allows each armed and uniformed company to enrol not more than 50 contributing members, who are to be exempt from duty on paying $3 each per annum. But this will amount to nothing—for who will pay $3 for exemption in a volunteer company, when he may get it by remaining in the line for $1 50?

The volunteers want some provision of law which will *fill up their ranks*—which 50 or even 100 contributing members would not do, even if they could be obtained.

These corps are almost entirely composed of young men just entering upon, or in the prime of manhood, who are either engaged in business for themselves or in the employment of others. In the cities and towns, the latter is most generally the case. But in either, the time required for volunteer service cannot always be spared. If, however, the exemption which the law allows to members of fire companies were extended to the volunteers—it would have the effect, certainly in the cities and towns, and, probably, generally, of filling their ranks. Take, for example, the city of Richmond, where there are no less than five jury courts, one or more almost always sitting, and, consequently requiring a large number of jurymen. Any man will prefer to give his own services or the services of those in his employment to a volunteer company, to being himself or to having them subject to be called upon at any time to serve as jurors for days and sometimes for weeks, when perhaps his own private business is of the most pressing character.

Exemption, then, from jury duty is the most efficient encouragement that the law can give; and, apart from the intrinsic importance of having a well organized volunteer force to meet any emergency, it would be but a moderate equivalent for services, as disinterested and patriotic as any can be.

I have the honor to be,

Very respectfully,

Your obed't. serv't.

WM. H. RICHARDSON,
Adj't. Gen'l.

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AGRICULTURAL PROFESSORSHIP.

VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE,
Nov. 24, 1849.

Gen. WM. H. RICHARDSON,
Adjutant-General.

DEAR SIR,

I am in receipt of your favour of the 19th instant, making enquiries relative to the suggestion of the governor, recommending an agricultural professorship for this institution. I consider the suggestion a most valuable one, and I am glad that I have the *data* at hand to shew its entire practicability. These *data* are derived from the detailed reports of our subsistence department, by which I am enabled to give you more precise information on the points referred to in your letter, than can probably be derived from any other quarter.

Should the recommendation of the governor be carried out, and a farm purchased for the experimental operations of the agricultural professorship, the subsistence department of the institute would furnish a home demand for its surplus products; and if properly conducted, it might readily supply all the agricultural products now consumed by a corps of 120 cadets. This consumption embraces the following articles:

Milk, 20 galls. per day, at 12½ cts.,		2 50	
Butter, 30 lbs. do. 12½ cts.,		3 75	
Vegetables do. - -		2 00	
Fruits, - do. - -		2 00	
		——3,600	per annum.
Flour, 150 bbls. at $4, - -		600	"
Corn, 450 do. at 50 cts. - -		225	"
Pork, 10,000 lbs. at $4, - -		400	"
Beef, 20,000 lbs. at $5, - -		1000	"
Poultry, (estimated,) - -		200	"
Total annual consumption, -		$6025	"

I would not expect the farm at first to furnish the supplies at lower rates than we are now paying, but it might reasonably be expected that when science and art had been judiciously applied to its cultivation as a *model* farm, one half the number of cattle now required would supply the milk and butter, and the increasing productiveness of the land would diminish the expense of all the agricultural products.

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So much for the economy of the governor's recommendation.

But the suggestion claims great consideration, when viewed as a scheme for organizing a *school of agriculture.* The professor, being placed in charge of the operations of the farm, would be expected not only to give his classes the most minute instruction in experimental farming, but, keeping constantly in view that the characteristic feature of the institute is to give its graduates practical and business qualifications and habits, he would arrange a system of tables and journals, shewing the daily operations of each part of the farm, including a record of observations, &c. In these duties, he should be assisted by regular details of his class, while the period of encampment might be most profitably employed in a more extended acquaintance with the out-door operations of the farm, and with occasional geological explorations. You can well imagine what results might thus be obtained in an institution organized and conducted as this is upon strictly military principles—and the state would soon appreciate the importance of the information which the monthly reports of this department would afford to its agriculturists. As a specimen of the practical information to be derived from daily records of operations, the accompanying monthly statement of our mess-hall consumption, upon which the estimates in the first part of this letter are based, need only be carefully examined. I need not advert to the importance of such a *model farm* in supplying the state with the most approved species of seed, roots, fruit, &c. while its central position would afford facilities to farmers to witness its operation.

In connection with these views, I might call your attention to the fact, that our board of visitors, at their annual meeting in July, under a conviction that the chair of physical sciences in this institution was overcharged with duties, have urged the establishment of a new professorship. The views of the governor might, therefore, be most advantageously tried, by placing, for the present, the agricultural professor in charge of the department of chemistry. By giving him the aid of a principal assistant in chemistry, the duties above enumerated might very well be associated with instruction in chemistry.

It would of course be expected that the agricultural professor should keep a strict account of profit and loss upon all species of cultivation tried, with all of which practical instruction should be given to his class.

I am, very respectfully,

Your obed't serv't,

FRANCIS H. SMITH.

P. S. I might add, that great economy would result to us in having the washing of the cadets done at the farm. This might be advantageously effected by employing the heat used in boiling the roots, &c. for cattle, for the washing apparatus. We pay now $1800 a year for washing.

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RESOLUTIONS

ON THE

SUBJECT OF SLAVERY.

STATE OF MISSOURI.

Resolved by the general assembly of the state of Missouri:

1st. That the federal constitution was the result of a compromise between the conflicting interests of the states which formed it; and in no part of that instrument is to be found any delegation of power to congress to legislate on the subject of slavery, excepting some special provisions having in view the prospective abolition of the African slave trade, and for the recovery of fugitive slaves; any attempt therefore, on the part of congress, to legislate on the subject, so as to affect the institution of slavery in the states, in the District of Columbia, or in the territories, is, to say the least, a violation of the principle upon which that instrument was founded.

2nd. That the territories acquired by the blood and treasure of the whole nation, ought to be governed for the common benefit of the people of all the states; and any organization of the territorial governments, excluding the citizens of any part of the Union from removing to such territories with their property, would be an exercise of power by congress, inconsistent with the spirit upon which our federal compact was based; insulting to the sovereignty and dignity of the states thus affected; calculated to alienate one portion of the Union from another, and tending ultimately to disunion.

3d. That this general assembly regard the conduct of the Northern states, on the subject of slavery, as releasing the slaveholding states from all further adherence to the basis of compromise fixed on by the act of congress of the 6th of March 1820, even if such act ever did impose any obligation upon the slaveholding states, and authorizes them to insist upon their rights under the constitution; but for the sake of harmony, and for the preservation of our federal Union, they will still sanction the application of the principles of the "Missouri compromise" to the recent territorial acquisitions, if by such concession future aggressions upon the equal rights of the states may be arrested and the spirit of anti-slavery fanaticism be extinguished.

4th. The right to prohibit slavery in any territory belongs exclusively to the people thereof, and can only be exercised by them in

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forming their constitution for a state government, or in their sovereign capacity as an independent state.

5th. That in the event of the passage of any act of congress, conflicting with the principles herein expressed, Missouri will be found in hearty co-operation with the slaveholding states, in such measures as may be deemed necessary for our mutual protection against the encroachments of Northern fanaticism.

6th. That our senators in congress be instructed, and our reprentatives be requested to act in conformity to the foregoing resolutions.

Resolved by the house of representatives, the senate concurring therein, That the secretary of state be required to transmit a copy of the resolutions passed at this session of the general assembly on the subject of slavery, to the executive of each of the states of the Union, with the request that the same be laid before their respective legislatures, and also a copy to each of our senators and representatives in congress.

Approved March 10, 1849.

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE.

The select committee, to whom were referred the report and resolutions of the legislature of Virginia, and also certain resolutions of the legislature of Missouri, upon the subject of fugitive slaves and other matters pertaining to the institution of slavery, respectfully

REPORT:

That without entering into any general examination of the reasoning of the report in question, your committee are of opinion that many of the topics therein discussed are such as to require no action on the part of New Hampshire. This state has "commenced" no "war of legislation against the owners of fugitive slaves." It has assumed no position upon which it may not rightly stand, without violation of the principles, either of justice, humanity or the constitution. It has been actuated by no "feigned philanthropy;" neither "irresponsible mobs, composed of fanatics, ruffians, and fugitive slaves," nor mobs in any other way constituted, have had any recent existence here. That "irregular outbreaks of brutal violence and ferocity have happened in the free states," that "insane fanatics and brutal ruffians" have in these scenes been continually violating the rights of those who own slaves, is asserted in the report under consideration, in language far too broad for truth, and far too angry for that courtesy which ought to be observed in the intercourse between sovereign states. That these pictures are drawn with more feeling than fidelity, and are the result of a distempered fancy rather than an impartial observation of

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facts, our knowledge of the orderly and law-observing character of non-slaveholding communities compel us to believe.

We trust that the report in question does a similar injustice to the slaveholding communities for which it speaks, when it intimates that if the laws are not modified and executed to their satisfaction, they will invade the territory of the free states, and re-act upon their Southern frontiers, forays which occurred upon the borders of Scotland in a semi-barbarous age!

We should regret the occurrence of such scenes. We should regret the attempt, threatened in various alternatives and in various parts of the report in question, to divide this Union, or excite an armed resistance to its laws. But yet we most confidently believe that our institutions are inherent with power sufficient for their own protection, and that of every portion of the American people.

The new legal remedy asked for by the report under consideration is indeed remarkable. That every postmaster and collector in the free states shall be clothed with the same judicial power over the rights and liberty of persons claimed as slaves, as courts of the United States may now exercise—that every member of this newly constituted host of magistrates, may surround himself with marshals, possessing every summary process—that all improper acts, occurring whenever and wherever, in presence of any considerable number of persons, an alleged fugitive slave is demanded or held in custody, shall be removed from the jurisdiction of the state courts to the courts of the United States—are claims so extraordinary, so insulting to the free states, that they cannot have been advanced with any expectation of their meeting with the sanction of any state where a regard to the interests of slavery has not become paramount to every proper appreciation of state rights, and of the rights and security of freemen.

The report of the Virginia legislature complains that the New England states, with a sterile soil and ungenial climate, have become, in proportion to their population, the most wealthy communities in the world, while comparative poverty has fallen upon the South, and its commerce and navigation have been transferred from its own harbors, to those of the North. It might have drawn a like comparison between Ohio and Kentucky—between free territory and slave territory at every point where they come in contact. Is it strange that the free states, with these facts every where spread out before them, should be unwilling to see slavery extended, with its blighting influences, over territories now free?

The committee conclude this report by recommending the adoption of the following resolutions:

1. *Resolved by the senate and house of representatives, in general court convened*, That, opposed to every form of oppression, the people of New Hampshire have ever viewed with deep regret the existence of slavery in this Union; that while they have steadfastly supported all sections in their constitutional rights, they have not only lamented its existence as a great social evil, but regarded it as fraught with danger to the peace and welfare of the nation.

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2. *Resolved*, That while, in periods of excitement, the opponents of slavery have resorted to measures which we have thought it our duty to oppose and censure, on the other hand slaveholding communities, in many portions of this confederacy, have engaged in excitements and resorted to measures equally deserving the severest condemnation.

3. *Resolved*, That we stand pledged by our course from the adoption of the federal constitution to the present time, to respect all the rights which that instrument guarantees to the slave states.

4. *Resolved*, That while we respect the rights of the slaveholding as well as the free portions of this Union—while we will not willingly consent that wrong be done to any member of the glorious confederacy to which we belong, we are firmly and unalterably opposed to the extension of slavery over any portion of American soil now free.

5. *Resolved*, That the American Union is strongly based upon the affections of an overwhelming majority of the American people—that we trust that it will outlive for ages the threats with which fanaticism assails it—that in its hour of peril, stout hearts and strong arms will be ready in every corner of our land to defend it—and that it will long continue here a proud ark of freedom, firm and enduring, the time-tried model after which shall be fashioned those free institutions which are hereafter to bestow their incalculable blessings upon the whole world.

6. *Resolved*, That in our opinion congress has the constitutional power to abolish the slave trade and slavery in the District of Columbia, and that our senators be instructed and our representatives requested to take all constitutional measures to accomplish these objects.

7. *Resolved*, That his excellency the governor be requested to transmit copies of the foregoing report and resolutions to the governors of the several states of the Union, and also a copy of the same to each of the senators and representatives of this state in the congress of the United States.

SAMUEL H. AYER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

WILLIAM P. WEEKS,
President of the Senate.

Approved, July 7, 1849.

SAMUEL DINSMOOR, *Governor.*

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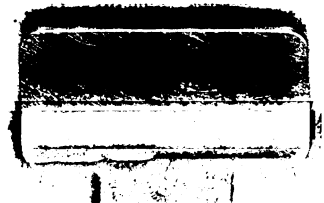

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